

NATURAL RESOURCE COMMISSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you consider to be the most important duty of being a member of the Natural Resources Commission (NRC)?
2. In the past, there have been allegations that the NRC selects the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Director according to the Governor's wishes, which is contrary to the intent of the law. How do you respond to this allegation?
3. What leadership and management qualities do you believe that the DNR Director should possess? Of those qualities, what is the single most important quality?
4. On behalf of whom or what would you base your decisions as a member of the NRC?
5. The NRC is obligated by law to set the long term strategy for the DNR as well as providing for the welfare of the state's natural resources. Do you believe that the NRC is capable of these responsibilities given the complex nature of the job?
6. How do you believe the current organizational structure of the DNR is functioning? Would you support a thorough review of the DNR?
7. Do you believe that there should be more opportunities for the public to comment on natural resources issues? If so, would you support the reestablishment of some of the boards and commissions that were abolished by the previous administration?
8. The Governor has indicated in the past that she might consider recombining the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the DNR into one department. What is your opinion on such a move?
9. The Michigan Constitution specifically charges the Legislative Branch with the responsibility to protect the state's natural resources from pollution, impairment and destruction (Article IV, Section 52). What is your view of the current mindset of the Michigan Legislature in regards to this role?
10. The NRC has a rich legacy of significant leadership in natural resources management. What one current or former member do you most admire for their contributions to the NRC and why?

NATURAL RESOURCE COMMISSION QUESTIONS

responses of Mary C. Brown
January 30, 2004

1. What do you consider to be the most important duty of being a member of the Natural Resources Commission (NRC)?

The most important duty of a member of the Natural Resources Commission is protecting the resources of Michigan for citizens today and tomorrow.

2. In the past, there have been allegations that the NRC selects the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Director according to the Governor's wishes, which is contrary to the intent of the law. How do you respond to this allegation?

I don't know how the relationship between Commissioners and the Governor figured in past appointments. Obviously the Director needs to work with both the Commission and the Governor so it makes sense that an appointee be acceptable to both but the final decision rests with the Commission.

3. What leadership and management qualities do you believe that the DNR Director should possess? Of those qualities, what is the single most important quality?

The Director should be energetic, able to articulate good policies and programs to protect the Natural Resources of the state, lead a staff as a team to implement the programs, evaluate the result, and make appropriate changes. Receiving and evaluating input from the public and staff and then articulating how that input is included in decisions is important because it will make the task of protecting resources much easier.

Probably the most important quality is having a clear vision of the path and passion for the journey of protecting the resource.

4. On behalf of whom or what would you base your decisions as a member of the NRC?

I would make decisions as a member of the NRC on what I thought was best for protecting Michigan's natural resources for all state citizens today and tomorrow. I would seriously look at ideas from all sources, seek to find ways to deal with conflicting ideas while meeting legitimate goals of groups or individuals. I would expect all members of the Commission to be doing the same.

5. The NRC is obligated by law to set the long term strategy for the DNR as well as providing for the welfare of the state's natural resources. Do you believe that the NRC is capable of these responsibilities given the complex nature of the job?

With the help of the Department staff, Legislature, Governor and users of the resource, I think it is possible for the Commission to reasonably fulfill this mandate.

6. How do you believe the current organizational structure of the DNR is functioning? Would you support a thorough review of the DNR?

I haven't been close enough to the Department operation in recent years to answer this question. When a new Director is appointed, I expect that person will want to do a review. At this point I do not know the optimal extent or timeline of that review.

7. Do you believe that there should be more opportunities for the public to comment on natural resources issues? If so, would you support the reestablishment of some of the boards and commissions that were abolished by the previous administration?

I believe public input is important to establishing natural resource policy. Many of the boards and commissions abolished in the past dealt with matters in the purview of the Department of Environmental Quality and not in the purview of the Natural Resources Commission.

8. The Governor has indicated in the past that she might consider recombining the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the DNR into one department. What is your opinion on such a move.

The administrative organization should be determined by what structure can best serve to protect the natural resources. So much of past organization has been determined as if resources were isolated from each other--air, water, land in its various configurations and uses. It is clear that these are interrelated in very complex and sometimes not very obvious ways--especially over time.

The Governor and the Legislature have the first opportunities to align and realign responsibilities in ways that make policy into actuality. I did not like the separation of the two departments but the administrative structure matters far less than the result in caring for the resource for our citizens now and leaving it in good shape for the future.

9. The Michigan Constitution specifically charges the Legislative Branch with the responsibility to protect the state's natural resources from pollution, impairment and destruction (Article IV, Section 52). What is your view of the current mindset of the Michigan Legislature in regards to this role?

I don't know the mindset of many individual legislators or the institution. I suspect that the Legislature like most Michigan citizens wants to protect our Natural Resources. Specific issues may not enjoy placement into the big jigsaw that is our heritage, responsibility, and legacy. That is the challenge we need to face together.

10. The NRC has a rich legacy of significant leadership in natural resources management. What one current or former member do you most admire for their contributions to the NRC and why?

I don't know enough about the role of past commissioners to answer this question.

Gerald Hall

REC'D JAN 30 2004

Answers to the second set of questions from the Senate

1. I consider setting general policies for the DNR to operate under that allow the use and benefit of our Natural Resources by our present generation, as well as protecting them for the generations to follow.
2. I can not speak to past allegations I have no knowledge of. I do understand the desire to separate natural resource decisions from politics.
3. A. The Director should have the honesty, integrity, ability and experience to lead a management team that creates positive partnerships and relationships with members of the Michigan Legislature; Office of the Governor, other State agencies, citizens and constituent groups, and local government entities and toward enhancing hunting, fishing & outdoor recreation opportunities in the State of Michigan.

B. Honesty
4. I will base my decisions on behalf of what is best for the citizens of Michigan after researching an issue, examining the evidence and listening to other people's opinions including constituents, DNR staff and legislators.
5. Yes, working to develop goals.
6. I have not been involved long enough with day-to-day operations of the DNR to develop an opinion on the organizational structure of the DNR.
7. I believe that by making the seven Commissioners available to the public by publishing their phone numbers and addresses as well as the public comment part of the monthly meetings of the Commission gives the public an adequate opportunity to give comment.
8. I am in favor of a system of state government that adequately serves the citizens of Michigan as efficiently as possible. If this meant splitting up or combining current departments I would be in favor of doing so.
9. Given the current budget problems the legislature is doing an adequate job.
10. I know of no one current or former member that stands out above the rest of the many citizens of our great state who have served on the NRC.